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ABSTRACT

The Minority Teacher Identification and Enrichment Program (MTIEP) is a university-based model that has served as a catalyst in the development of a statewide program to increase the pool of minority teachers in the State of Illinois. The program created a network of Minority Teacher Education Associations (MTEAs) which identified potential teachers at the community college, high school, and junior high school levels, and provided them with pertinent information, educational activities and support for teaching as a career. Phase one of the program is designed to be mentor/mentee intensive and relies on professionals, including superintendents, principals, and teachers, to recruit minority students into the local MTEAs. The mentors assist the mentees by providing educational programs and activities designed to sharpen literacy, mathematical, and computing skills, and by sharing their knowledge of the teaching profession, its requirements and its opportunities. Phase two consists of summer programs on university campuses designed to capitalize on the mentoring process which occurs when mentors and mentees are brought together for the common purpose of enhancing the recruitment, preparation, and retention of minority teachers. Students attend classes designed to enhance their basic academic, study, and social and cultural skills; participate in panel discussions; and interact with other teacher education majors, strengthening their classroom and tutorial effectiveness. In the first year of the program, approximately 125 students participated in the activities of the MTEAs. Examples of activities accomplished include training as tutors and mentors; development of program activities; producing a video tape, newsletters, and brochures; enhanced writing, math, and communication skills; and participation in hands-on career development workshops, teacher preparation courses, and seminars. (ND)

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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

PLANTING SEEDS FOR RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND GRADUATION OF MINORITY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Planting Seeds for Recruitment, Retention and Graduation of Minority Teachers

The Minority Teacher Identification and Enrichment Program is a university-based model that has successfully served as a catalyst in the development of a state-wide program to increase the pool of minority teachers in the State of Illinois. This program created a network of Minority Teacher Education Associations which identified potential teachers at the community college, high school and junior high school levels; and provided them with pertinent information, educational activities and support for teaching as a career.

Objective: The primary goal of the Minority Teacher Identification and Enrichment Program (MTIEP) is the creation of a network of chapters of the Minority Teacher Education Associations (MTEA) at community colleges and their feeder schools in Eastern's service region. The MTIEP will identify potential teachers among minority students at cooperating community colleges and their feeder schools. Once identified, these students will be provided with opportunities to enhance their mastery of the many skills prerequisite to their success as teachers. Ultimately, the goal of this Program is to increase the number of minority teachers in the State of Illinois. We believe that this goal can be achieved through a concerted, long term plan starting at the junior high school level and involving their teachers, counselors and other support staff.

Project Objectives:

1. To increase the State's pool of minority teachers.
2. To enhance the teaching effectiveness of potential and current minority teachers.
3. To improve minority students' basic literacy, mathematical and computing skills.
4. To improve minority student retention.
5. To provide minority students with appropriate role models.
6. To improve transfer articulation with education programs.
7. To motivate minority students to apply to and attend institutions of higher education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research indicates a shortage of minority teachers is rooted in school desegregation, elitism in higher education, racism and a variety of urban decay. While the supply of potential teachers is readily available in the ethnic and urban communities as the number of minority students increases. The pool of minority candidates seeking teacher certification continues to decline. Research indicates that the minority populations are likely to make up the majority in the public schools by the 21st century. Indeed, the majority of students in the ten largest school districts in the country are minorities.

Based on the premise that there is a need to recruit and retain minority students in education, a university based model was implemented to serve as a catalyst in the development of a state wide organization which designed to enhance and fortify diversity offered by people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This program is designed to create a network of MTEAs which will identify potential teachers among minority students in the local cooperating feeder school districts. Once the students have been identified, they will be provided with opportunities to enhance the mastery of the many skills needed for success as teachers. Ultimately the goal of this Program is to increase the number of minority teachers in the State of Illinois.

TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

Phase one of the program is designed to be mentor/mentee-intensive and relies on professionals inclusive of superintendents, principals, and teachers to recruit minority students into the local MTEAs. The mentors assist the mentees in providing educational programs and activities designed to sharpen their literacy, mathematical, and computing skills. They will also share their knowledge of the teaching profession, its requirements and its opportunities. Each chapter of the MTEA consists of a local coalition of students, educators, and community leaders and functions as an educational support group. Educational training occurs during regularly scheduled MTEA meetings with the local cooperating feeder school districts. Faculty advisors, sponsors and other educational experts offer diagnostic assessment of student members' basic skills, and supplemental instruction aimed at helping minority students overcome their difficulties in historically-identified "threshold courses". Additionally they share information on financial resources available to students including grants, scholarships, fellowships, loans etc. MTEA members serve as tutors, student teachers, mentors and role models in primary, middle and secondary schools.

Phase two of this program occurs on the university campus. Students participate in summer programs designed to capitalize on the mentoring process which occurs when mentors and mentees are brought together on campus for the common purpose of enhancing the retention, recruitment and preparation of minority teachers. During this summer program, students attend classes designed to enhance their basic academic skills, study, and social and cultural skills. In the pursuit of the teaching degree, students participate in pertinent panel discussions and interact with other teacher education majors which strengthens their classroom and tutorial effectiveness. University MTEA members and sponsors, including practicing teachers, advisors and counselors utilize their expertise and skills to assist in the implementation of the summer programs.

Through the aforementioned phases activities and the collaborative efforts of the local school district personnel (superintendents, principals, teachers, guidance counselors central office personnel and local community leaders) Minority Teacher Identification and Enrichment Program is conservatively estimated to serve minority students from two community colleges and their feeder schools with approximately 125 students.

STRATEGIES TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS FOR THE MTIEP:

1. Identify and establish approximately 10 schools for participation in the MTEA.
2. Identify and select members for an MTEA Advisory Board to assist in the development and implementation of local MTEA chapters.
3. Identify and train student mentors/tutors from the university MTEAs.
4. Develop and supervise mentor-mentoree and tutorial relationships in cooperating institutions.
5. Establish consultant and speaker schedules for MTEA chapters.
6. Assist in the teacher placement of minority student teachers.
7. Assist in the placement of members in university Minority Internship Programs.
8. Identify conferences and workshops for MTEA members to attend to enhance their growth and development.
9. Provide information on transfer articulation, academic advisement, financial aid resources, and other topics pertinent to minority teacher education.

SUMMER SCHOOL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Specific Activities:

1. To provide an opportunity for students and their teachers of different ages and abilities to interact in a learning-living environment designed to enhance the preparation of minority teachers.
2. To provide a program for high school seniors and second year community college students that will familiarize them with life and expectations at a four-year institution.
3. To provide all participants in the summer school program an opportunity to sharpen basic, tutorial, mentoring skills and to enrich their understanding in the teaching profession. Through the mentoring process students will become familiar with a learning-living environment at a four-year institution.

DATA SOURCES

By the year 2000, at least one-third of the nation's population and available work force will be comprised of people of color. There continues to be a growing disparity between the number of minorities entering into the teaching profession and other occupations. A survey of 50 Eastern Illinois University college of education majors was conducted. Eighty percent of that survey indicated a need to establish a support organization to assist students in the completion of undergraduate degree program. A survey administered to 50 state universities, 60% revealed that a need for additional academic, social and economic support was needed for minority students to successfully complete their education undergraduate degree program.

A national survey of 100 selected universities, 88% responded, 67% indicated that there was no written minority teacher education, recruitment, retention plan, 58% responded that there was no services such as testing, scholarships, financial aide, resume writing and interviewing techniques available for minorities in the college of education. Based upon these findings, a Minority Teacher Education Association was established and became the impetus for the Minority Teacher Education Enrichment grant which was funded for $150,000 in the fall of 1994 under the Higher Education Cooperation Act.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the acquisition of the Grant, Eastern Illinois University in partnership with Danville Area College and Rend Lake College and the public feeder schools which includes high school and

middle schools, established nine viable local MTEA chapters. In the first year of the program, approximately 125 students are actively participating in the activities of the MTEA. Examples of the activities accomplished include training as tutors, mentors, development of program, activities, produced a video tape, newsletters, brochures, enhanced writing, math and communication skills, participation in hands on career development workshops, teacher preparation courses, seminars and social skills. We plan to increase the number of community college and feeder schools that will include four additional community colleges and 19 feeder school participants in the coming year while consolidating the work in the original group.

SIGNIFICANCE: The recruitment, retention and graduation of minorities in teacher education programs has remained a significant challenge facing educators. The proposed presentation is designed to share with the AACTE audience the details of Eastern's long-term project designed to attract, prepare and place increased numbers of minority teachers in our nation's schools. Our experiences of planting seeds in Eastern's service region, we believe, can be useful to others as they struggle with the recruitment/retention implications of the professional aspects of diversity in education.